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ABSTRACT

The quality of interpersonal relationships materially affects the outcome of encounters between teachers and administrators. The supervisor will, therefore, achieve the greatest overall success if he is supportive in his leadership style. His performance depends, too, on technical competence and managerial ability. There is a need for more creative courses in the training of supervisors with such qualities. Since nonverbal behaviors play such an important part in interpersonal relationships, the supervisee and his supervisor should agree on the validity of the observation instruments and methods to be used. At the same time, however, systems approach theories have a role to play in planning and diagnosis, and in the formulation of supervisory conference strategies. (Author)

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The Supervisory Role

Warren Mellor

> Research conducted during the past three decades paints a dismal picture of teacher satisfaction concerning supervision. Stated simply, teachers regard the supervision which they receive as inadequate and inappropriate. . . . [The supervisor] is more likely to make the relationship a growth-promoting one when he communicates a desire to understand the other person's meanings and feelings. This attitude of wanting to understand is expressed in a variety of ways. When he talks, the helping person is less inclined to give instruction and advice, thus creating a climate which fosters independence. He avoids criticism and withholds evaluative judgments of the other person's ideas, thoughts, feelings, and behavior. He listens more often than he talks and when he speaks he strives to understand what the other person is communicating in thought and feeling. The comments of the helping person are aimed at assisting the other individual to clarify his own meanings and attitudes.
>
> *Blumberg (1970)*

The quality of interpersonal relationships materially affects the outcome of encounters between teachers and administrators. The supervisor will achieve the greatest overall success if he is supportive in his leadership style. Assisting the teacher to use his own resource potential for more effective classroom performance promotes human resource development and organizational enrichment.

The role of the supervisor relates ultimately to the improvement of instructional practices in schools. It is very important that a clear distinction be maintained between

teacher supervision in this sense and teacher evaluation for accountability. Since an effective supervisor is also a good manager, his performance depends on technical competence and managerial ability in addition to human relations skills.

Taking up these themes, this review examines teacher-supervisor conferences. Emphasis on planning and diagnostic analysis strategies indicates a place for systems-approach theories, as well as for more creative courses to train supervisors. Materials on classroom interaction and additional sources stress the need for agreement on the validity of observation instruments and methods.

Of the documents reviewed, seventeen are available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Complete instructions for ordering are given at the end of the review.

Objectives for Supervisors

The intention of clinical supervision is to improve instruction through help to the teacher (Moore and Mattaliano 1970). It is a method of carrying out supervision in a classroom through face-to-face relationships between supervisor and teacher. The cycle begins with a preobservation session. During classroom observation the supervisor comes to the classroom with recording instruments. Strategy sessions make plans and prepare for the meeting of teacher and supervisor to analyze instruction. A postconference session analyzes the supervision.

Behavioral objectives established by the teacher for students in the classroom become the supervisor's instructional objectives (Cook 1971). The supervisor helps students attain their objectives by diagnosing the curriculum and prescribing steps to remedy areas of concern. He also facilitates curriculum changes, while assisting teachers to acquire new competencies necessary for their students' success.

Sergiovanni (1971) discusses objectives for modern supervisors. He proposes an approach that emphasizes human resource development and organizational enrichment. Consideration of the problems faced by supervisors and administrators—change, control, motivation, and leadership—illustrates the advantages of his approach.

The school principal has a supervisory role related directly to the classroom work of teachers and students (Benjamin 1970). Psycho-sociological theories of learning and education indicate the nature of this role. Areas in which principals can become involved are curriculum materials and instructional procedures, mental hygiene of teachers, and administrative arrangements. Inservice activities encourage the instructional principal to upgrade his competence in the field of curriculum.

In a discussion of the relationship of supervision to accountability, McNeil (1972) analyzes some distinctions frequently overlooked in designing accountability plans. One concern is the difference between accounting for the process used and for the product achieved. He also points out various courses of action open to a supervisor if it is found that the teacher is not as effective as might have been expected.

Experience with teacher evaluation in a Canadian high school leads one principal (Frison 1970) to insist that the evaluation of teacher performance is a personal matter. Because of the very personal nature of teaching, checklists are too harsh, cold, and even brutal. The author notes that he

tries to observe each teacher in his school for one complete period each semester. In the subsequent discussion, principal and teacher examine ways in which the teacher may improve his instructional techniques.

SUPERVISOR PERFORMANCE

A study by Churukian and Cryan (1972) attempted to establish whether teacher perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationships with their supervisors were related to perceptions of supervisor style. One questionnaire measured perceptions in such areas of concern as regard and empathy. The second rated the amount of emphasis (1) perceived as given to each of nine supervisory behaviors, and (2) perceived as desirable for each of the nine styles. Results indicate that high quality interpersonal relationships should be the supervisor's primary objective.

Neville (1971) identifies and interprets critical factors in supervisory performance. He reviews twelve survey research studies on teacher supervision. Findings indicate at least three required areas of competence:

- human relations
- technical competence
- managerial ability

The purpose of a 1972 study (Cryan) was to determine whether supervisor verbal style is related to teacher perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationships with supervisors. The hypothesis was that indirect supervisory styles will result in higher quality interpersonal relationships between teacher and supervisor. Questionnaire results appear to indicate that verbal style is not in itself a useful predictor of the quality of such relationships.

In performing his responsibilities, the supervisor should keep in mind the beneficial effects he may have on those he directs (Combs 1970).

Drawing in part on the work of Carl Rogers, Blumberg (1970) comments that supervisory conferences generally appear to be less successful when supervisors fail to foster a helping relationship.

A "supportive style" of leadership allows the supervisor to exert a positive influence (Helwig 1968). In his exercise of influence and power, the supervisor must rely more on the formal hierarchy than on the informal power structure. However, if the supervisor can modify his own behavior to that of a supportive role, he can, to a degree, be effective outside the formal hierarchical structure. Empirical study has identified variables helpful in outlining the role of the supervisor within the school. In this regard, the best means at his disposal appears to be his own technical competence.

CONFERENCE STRATEGIES

The effective supervisor uses the conference as a diagnostic opportunity for both the teacher and himself (McGee 1970). In a handbook of practical guidelines for educational supervision he makes the following assertions:

- Good management procedures create time for supervision.
- Supervision is grounded on mutual courtesy and clear expectations shared with the staff.
- Classroom visitations should be made frequently, using the class period as a reasonable measure for the duration of a visit.

Young (1971) focuses on a systems approach for developing conference strategies. The process involves first identifying performance objectives through a functional analysis of teaching. Investigation of the interacting variables generates alternative procedures and identifies supervisory behaviors. Elements from teaching, training research, counseling, learning theory, and other disciplines then combine into comprehensive strategies based on a sequence of critical decision points. The results provide the practicing supervisor with a research base for conducting conferences with teachers. Young's paper also contains a flow chart and the model of a suggested conference strategy.

Training should be provided to make supervising behavior more creative in conference situations (Barbour 1971). Videotapes from a study examining cognitive behavior indicate that

- supervisors talked more than 55 percent of the time
- very little higher level cognitive activity was exhibited by either supervisors or student teachers
- supervisors generally set a trend and students followed suit

Even in a hostile conference, the thinking levels of both subjects showed great similarity. Those who had had inservice training favored somewhat higher thought levels than those who had not. Among the implications drawn is the recommendation that courses be provided to foster the development of creative thought among supervisors.

School administrators have been able to give greater support to the classroom teacher after participating in an expert teacher action program (Washington 1971). Twenty-five variables related to the duties of the professional teacher compose a set of standards defining expert teaching. On the basis of these variables, methods of evaluating observations are explored. The book also details procedures for becoming a skilled observer of classroom actions and conditions. Teachers and administrators who have participated in the program have developed a high degree of proficiency in classroom observation and self-evaluation.

Analysis of Classroom Interaction

Four separate studies compared remote versus face-to-face supervision (Dalrymple and others 1971). The first found that use of an audio-phone method reduced costs while satisfying all persons involved. Another study compared face-to-face, audio-phone, and video-phone methods of supervision. It tested hypotheses related to teaching competence, teaching confidence, and satisfaction. Satisfaction was greatest for face-to-face and video-phone methods, but there was no difference between groups in teaching competence or confidence.

A report by Galloway (1972) emphasizes the importance of nonverbal behaviors as a form of "language" in the teacher-student relationship. Such behaviors act as communication channels that are difficult to control or censor. Nonverbal cues function as qualifiers to indicate how verbal statements ought to be understood. Galloway discusses some observation instruments designed to provide teachers with feedback on their nonverbal behavior. Teachers tend to be defensive about observations with which they disagree, and a supervisor's comments on nonverbal behavior seem to dramatize these value differences. If both teacher and supervisor can agree on the validity of an

observation system, however, the difficulty of value differences is removed.

As a result of concern over the adequacy of teacher-rating instruments, a project was begun to develop a pool of items describing teacher behavior (Baral and others 1968). At present the pool consists of more than one thousand items drawn from the literature and written for the project. A complete list of these items is included in the document.

Some of the nineteen categories used are

- personal and professional characteristics
- motivation
- discipline
- lecturing
- use of instructional materials
- discussions and small group work

The item pool is stored on-line in an IBM 360/67 computer. Two computer programs allow the investigator to select the items he wishes to examine or to generate rating forms for use in classroom observation.

A study (Long 1971) was done to see if the medium used in translating observed behavior into analyzable data has an effect on the data obtained and, if so, what the nature of that effect is. Four media forms were considered—direct observation, audio tape recordings, video tape recordings, and typescripts. The experiment showed that for certain verbal behaviors the medium used did exert a significant influence on the data obtained. However, these effects did not become more pronounced as a more complex system of behavioral categories was used. Consequently, with the exception of typescript, factors such as cost and ease of data collection should be given primary consideration in choosing a medium.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE MATERIALS

Two volumes edited by Simon and Boyer (1970) describe thirteen classroom observation systems for collecting data about human interaction in the teaching-learning process. They form a supplement to the previous fifteen volumes of "Mirrors for Behavior." The instruments relate to dimensions of the communication process: classroom structure, levels of cognitive and affective experience, classroom management, pupil activities, and nonverbal expression.

Materials describing observation instruments and their application are listed by Abramson and Spilman (1971) in a bibliography containing over 150 entries. Titles are presented in three sections: the development and use of observation techniques, and statistical considerations related to data collected; studies in which observation techniques have been used as a research tool; and papers from an annotated bibliography by Sandefur and Bressler.

A collection of papers by Furst and others (1971) is the third in a series on "Supervisory Strategies in Clinical Experiences." It contains three papers. The first, "Interaction Analysis in Teacher Education: A Review of Studies," concentrates on those studies designed to teach the Flanders behavior recording technique to preservice educators. The second paper, "Classroom Observation Systems in Preparing School Personnel," describes selected classroom observation systems, including affective, cognitive, and multidimensional. The third, "Supervisory Conferences in Selected Institutions," describes four supervisory conference procedures and identifies supervisor behaviors and institutional characteristics.

To gather the documents in this review, *Research in Education* and *Current Index to Journals in Education* monthly catalogs were searched from January 1971 through March 1973, using as search terms the descriptors: **Classroom Environment, Classroom Observation Techniques, Interaction Process Analysis, Supervisory Methods, Teacher Administrator Relationship,** and **Teacher Supervision.**

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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

The intention of clinical supervision is to improve instruction through help to the teacher. *Moore and Mattaliano (1970)*

The school principal has a supervisory role related directly to the classroom work of teachers and students. *Benjamin (1970)*

A "supportive style" of leadership allows the supervisor to exert a positive influence. *Helwig (1968)*

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If both teacher and supervisor can agree on the validity of an observation system, the difficulty of value differences is removed. *Galloway (1972)*

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